



THE NATURE OF VOLUNTEERING

Vol 1. No. 27

EXPLORE THE WONDERS OF NATURE - VOLUNTEER

Spring 2006

DID YOU KNOW ...

When volunteer expenses are deductible?

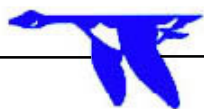
Volunteers *cannot* deduct the value of their time, but you *can* deduct nonreimbursed expenses (local travel, meals, travel expenses, lodging, supplies, and a mileage rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for the operation of a personal vehicle for volunteer work) as a deductible contribution on Federal income tax returns.

You *can* deduct the cost of gas and oil that are directly related to getting to and from the place where you are a volunteer. If you do not want to figure your actual costs, you can deduct 14 cents for each mile.

You *cannot* deduct payments for child care expenses as a charitable contribution even if they are necessary so you can do volunteer work for a qualified organization.

The volunteer should retain a copy of the Volunteer Services Agreement and use it to support this claim.

IRS Publication 526, "Charitable Contributions"



**AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
REFUGES ...**

Wild Things

*where wildlife
comes naturally!*

103rd Anniversary of the Refuge System

Dale Hall, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director

It has been a year of achievements and challenges since the National Wildlife Refuge System's last anniversary.

We cheered about a year ago when the Ivory-billed woodpecker - thought extinct for about 60 years - reappeared at Cache River National Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas. In a grainy video that looked as good as a Hollywood production to me, the flight of the Ivory-billed represented all the wildlife conservation work we do so well, everyday, on the ground.

We cheered again when national wildlife refuges scored a solid "A" on the Visitor Satisfaction Survey. "This is heaven on Earth," said one person who took the survey, which showed that a whopping 95 percent of respondents agreed they were satisfied with their experiences when they came to national wildlife refuges.

We were happy to learn that the National Wildlife Refuge System is a significant economic engine, even as we do outstanding work in fulfilling our mission of conserving, managing and sometimes restoring wildlife and the habitats on which they depend. The nearly 37 million people who visited national wildlife refuges in fiscal year 2004 generated almost \$1.4 billion in total economic activity - an enviable figure that is about four times the Refuge System's annual budget.

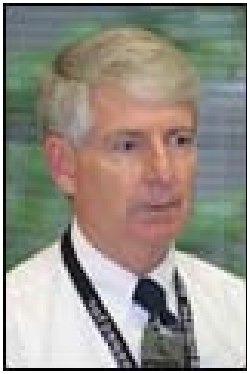
But then the rains came - Hurricanes Katrina and Rita - bringing destruction to our Gulf Coast national wildlife refuges. Even today, as we celebrate the Refuge System's 103rd anniversary, some wildlife refuges have not yet been able to reopen for public use. Others are grappling with damage that will take some time and a great deal of resources to reverse. We are committed to restoring each and every one of our national wildlife refuges.



Anniversary - continued page 2

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CHIEF'S CORNER

Refuge System Chief Bill Hartwig

We may not be able to fully know how much damage Hurricanes Katrina and Rita inflicted on national wildlife refuges for months - maybe not until the spring. At Breton Refuge, for

example, we have to wait until spring to judge the nesting season for endangered brown pelicans and therefore the real impact of Hurricane Katrina on the refuge's wilderness area. Four thousand pairs nested on the refuge last spring. Who knows what will happen this spring.

But, while we are still calculating the wildlife impacts, we are always witnessing the human report. In that way, the Refuge System has a lot to be thankful for. Not only did U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service people help communities flattened by the storms, but we also helped one another.

In 2004, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida raised funds for employees of J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge who had been hit hard by Hurricane Charley. In 2005, Ding Darling Refuge decided it was time to give back. So the Ding Darling Wildlife Society, the refuge's Friends organization, organized a collection.

As of December 22, 2005, about \$29,000 had been collected. Service employees from every part of the country - from Alaska to Hawaii, from Maine to Puerto Rico - donated what they could spare. Other Friends organizations held book sales and various fundraisers to donate to the Ding Darling Society fund. Just before Thanksgiving, \$26,000 was distributed among Service families who had been severely affected by one of the hurricanes. In the some of the worst cases, families who had little or no flood insurance. used the money to replace appliances ruined by the floodwaters and to begin to put their lives back in order.

Our donations can't replace the family photos and other mementoes that are forever lost. We can't erase the awful memories or the sense of dislocation. Instead, we gave friendship and support when we saw our neighbors and colleagues in trouble. The Service family has been strengthened by giving back to people who have lost too much and who, nonetheless, continue to work on behalf of the natural resources that enrich the lives of all Americans.

Anniversary - continued from page 1

We can't talk about the hurricanes without, in the same breath, taking pride in the heroic work our people did in Louisiana to bring help to those in need. Hundreds of Fish and Wildlife Service and Refuge System people, many of whom had been hard hit by the storms themselves, brought their expertise to aid communities, rescuing people trapped by the waters, giving food, water, fuel and a safe place to local police and fire departments, and opening access to the Louisiana Heart Hospital. National wildlife refuges have always been good neighbors, and that showed when our neighbors were in trouble.

As we celebrate the Refuge System's 103rd anniversary, we can take pride in knowing that the National Wildlife Refuge System is fulfilling the vision of President Theodore Roosevelt — and going way beyond. Thanks to you, America's national wildlife refuges are, indeed, heaven on Earth - for the creatures who call our lands home and for the people who love what they see and experience there. Thank you for all your work.



Appropriations Update

On February 6, the president made public his budget request for fiscal year (FY) 2007 appropriations for the Department of the Interior, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS).

The FY 2007 budget request proposes a \$322 million cut for the Department of the Interior. The requested funding level for the operations and maintenance (O&M) account for the Refuge System was \$381.7 million. This funding level is approximately \$11 million less than the administration's FY 2006 request and \$763,000 less than the actual FY 2006 funding level (after Congressional rescissions and agency reprogrammings). The FY 2007 Refuge System O&M funding request from the president represents a significant cut in funding for the FWS.

Cindy Heffley, Visitor Services Manager

Since Jorge has stepped down from the tower to be the National Coordinator of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in Maryland, I have decided to perch atop it and carry on with my own views from the visitor services perspective. I hope you'll enjoy the view as much as I do.

One view I've been enjoying lately is the new Songbird Trail. I'm fortunate to be able to work on Saturdays now, so I'm spending more time outside enjoying the refuge and its visitors. Where is the Songbird Trail you might ask? We have posted some signs at the trail heads, and the Trail is in our general brochure and Wildlife Drive handout, but many people haven't discovered it. So don't feel bad if this is the first time you've heard about it. I'm about to help you get better acquainted with this special place.

This trail can be accessed from many points. If you're looking for a short hike, you can take a leisurely 2.2 mile walk through the woods starting off a point on the Wildlife Drive or Jen's Trail. For a longer walk, take the loop option from Jen's Trail, wind through the woods, and return via the Wildlife Drive. This option will give you 3.6 miles of beautiful wildlife viewing opportunities. Another loop option is to start at the Aker's Trail, go down the steps behind the picnic area, and follow the Wildlife Drive to the entrance of the Songbird Trail. From there, you can continue on the 2.2 mile trail through the woods then return to the Aker's Trail via the Wildlife Drive. This option will give you a five-mile trek through a variety of habitats. The trail is marked with blue blazed trees. If you choose to walk on a spur, the trees are blazed yellow or pink.

One word of advice—if you are walking on the Wildlife Drive be watchful of vehicles. Although much of the area is posted at 10-15 MPH, many visitors have a problem watching their speed. A second piece of advice—if choosing to do either of the loops, don't always go the same direction. Unlike the Wildlife Drive, the trails aren't one-way! Sometimes we can get a different perspective on our surroundings by traveling in a different direction than everyone else. Don't be surprised if you come across hikers or joggers who seem as if they've been coming there all their lives. Many visitors have been using the area since we first blazed the trail. Still others, such as volunteer Al Martens, have been involved with not only planning the trail, but also setting up benches and conducting bird surveys. His surveys not only show us the variety of bird species to be found on the Trail but also allow us to share in the delight he gets with each experience.

Below is a small taste of one recent survey. As you read it you can almost hear the birds in the trees and smell the crisp winter air.

It was a warm Saturday morning in late February. My hike started in the visitor parking lot and through the picnic area. A small flock of Eastern Bluebirds made themselves very visible in the uncut grass in the back of the field behind the Friends Gift Shop. As I trekked through the woods and down the stairs past the Akers Trail, I turned left to see a pair of Hermit Thrush flying back and forth across the trail under the Cooper's Hawk's nest. As I approached the end of the Wildlife Drive, another Hermit Thrush was at the side of the road near the return box for the drive brochures.



I decided to stop at the bridge on the Wildlife Drive. This offered a good, close-up view of winter ducks including Ring-necked, Hooded Merganser and Mallards as well as Canada Geese and American Coots. By this time, I realized I wasn't the only person enjoying the Songbird Trail. A walker/jogger came by doing his third round-

trip of the trail this morning

Heading up the off-road section of the trail was rather quiet. Not having been through here since autumn leaves covered the oak trees, the openness of the woods was striking. The roll of the land is now very visible. Coming into the first meadow another group of eight Bluebirds fluttered around some short trees and a fallen down old Bluebird box. It made me wonder if they were looking for a summer place. I hope so since I didn't see any of them in this area last summer.

Through the woods and up to the second meadow, it's apparent the trail is in good condition. There have been new trail blaze marks added and new benches are in place. The grass and brush are still trim. In the second meadow there are no Bluebirds, but the resident Red-tailed Hawk is skimming the tree tops bordering the field.

A regular weekly walker of the trail stopped and mentioned that it had been a treat this winter to walk the trail after fresh-fallen snow. With snow on the trees above and untrodden snow on the trail, a special silence was created in the woods.

A WORD FROM OUR FRIENDS

The Friends of Forsythe NWR is a non-profit group established in 1998 to provide support and services to the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in Oceanville, New Jersey. Our goals are:



- Promoting a better understanding of the natural history and environment of Southern New Jersey, the Edwin B. Forsythe NWR and the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- Helping to preserve and enhance the wildlife habitat at this Refuge, and to assist the Refuge, the Refuge System and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a variety of educational and supportive efforts.

Please consider joining the Friends of Forsythe and help us accomplish these goals. Call 609-748-1535 or visit www.friendsofforsythe.org

Friends Board Change

Several new members have joined our Board of Directors following the loss of some long time members due to changes in their regular jobs. Betsy Griffiths, Dan Hernandez and JoAnn McEnerney are now settling in as excellent replacements. All three are connected with Stockton College and bring some new talents to the Board. They join Ed Bristow, Kris Arcuri, Roz Herlands, Arnie Mohel, Rich Koterba and Dave Rhodes. As we move forward with new programs and work on getting a new visitor center, efforts will increase in attracting new members and volunteers to carry out the Board's ambitious plans for the future. We'll keep you posted.

Store News

The Friends Store will re-open on March 4th and close on June 11th. New items include additional children's books, T-shirts, some lovely earrings made from recycled cereal boxes as well as some new books and CDs. Don't forget that members are entitled to a 10% discount. The store will continue to have annual passes for sale and binoculars to rent.

Visitor Center Report

We continue the process. As a result, we will be contacting Congressmen LoBiondo and Saxton to submit a new request for the next budget for planning money. Meanwhile, Ecological Services, now housed in leased space in Pleasantville, will be included in the plan. NJ Fish & Game folks are also interested in some space and apparently have offered some planning money. Coastal Heritage Trail has also expressed interest in some space for a center at the Refuge, which is a part of the Trail. Locally, the County Executive and Atlantic County Assembly and Senate reps have also agreed to support this. Further contacts are planned with other agencies on all levels to help push this through. Eco-tourism has become very big business and this area is part of the greater South Jersey region. You can help by supporting this through your own Congressional representatives and senators.

Report by Friends President Dr. Ed Bristow



2006 Monthly Program Schedule

General meetings will be held on the SECOND Saturday of every month.

Arrive at 9:30 a.m. to socialize.
Time to Shine starts at 9:45
Official business starts at 10:00.

April 8	Macro Photography
May 13	Lighting
June 10	Photoshop Basics
July 8	To be determined
August 12	To be determined
September 9	To be determined Member Survey
October 14	To be determined
November 11	REFUGE SHOOTOUT!!! Juried Competition
December 9	Holiday Potluck Dinner

Reminder!

As always, please bring to the meeting your useable photos of Forsythe or Forsythe events to contribute to the bank of scanned photos on file at the Refuge!

Want more information about Stay Focused?
Check us out at

<http://www.stayfocusedphotoclub.com>

Mariann Davis
Secretary, Stay Focused Photo Club

LE CORNER



Welcome to the Refuge Law Enforcement Corner, A.K.A. - L.E. Corner. This new (Does anybody know how long we can keep calling this new?) section of the newsletter is dedicated to informing readers how refuge law enforcement here at The Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge is working to uphold the mission of the Refuge System. We hope you will enjoy these tid-bits of information, stories, and other stuff that come to mind and passed along by the Office of Refuge Law Enforcement.

Well we made it through another hunting season at the refuge. All in all it was par for the course. The mild winter brought out more hunters, especially waterfowl hunters because the bay never froze up. The down side was there didn't seem to be as many birds due to the weather. Refuge officers inspected many hunters in the field and responded to numerous complaints. All said and done over 20 citations were issued for various reasons such as taking out of season, taking over the limit, shooting before or after legal hunting hours, documentation, etc. Some warnings were given out as well. Refuge officers often worked with New Jersey Conservation Officers, both on and off the refuge.

We are seeing signs that spring is right around the corner. One nice warm weekend in early March, Refuge Officers decided to work late knowing that all the teenagers that have been cooped up in the house all winter would be dying to get out and drink alcohol in the woods on your wildlife refuge. Sure enough, around 9 p.m. in the refuge section of Lacey Township we noticed a glow of a fire back in the woods and rounded up four minors. Each was issued citations and the New Jersey Forest Fire Service, due to its size, had to put out the fire. That same night around 11 p.m. we hit another area and came across the same thing with only three minors this time. Same deal, minus the Forest Fire Service. The beer that was there was enough to put out that fire. Oh yeah, did we mention we found another homeless person living in the woods on the refuge? I'm thinking we could set them up with a uniform and have him provide information about the refuge...no not really.

Good news is law enforcement is getting another officer for a few months as Officer Sean Healy, a

recent graduate from the Academy, stationed at Stewart B McKinney will be at Forsythe conducting his field training. I'll let him introduce himself:

I graduated the NY State Ranger School in Adirondacks, in May of 1996, with an associate in Forest Technology. My career with the US Fish and Wildlife Service began in June. Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex hired me as a Forest Technician. I spent five years working as part of the fire crews during the summers. During the winter months, I was hired as an independent contractor for wetland restoration. In 2001, I moved to Connecticut so my fiancé could complete her masters in education. I received a job at the Stewart B. McKinney NWR as a Biological Technician for the summer. I worked for the state of Connecticut for the winter months as a Wetlands Specialist. In the spring of 2002, I received a full time position as a Maintenance Worker at the Stewart B. McKinney NWR.

I have been interested in becoming a Refuge Officer since starting with the FWS. In the summer of 2004, I was finally able to accomplish this career goal. I was offered a position as a Park Ranger at the Stewart B. McKinney NWR. My starting date at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Georgia, was August 4th. I graduated on December 14th. I then attended the Refuge Officers Basics School for two weeks at NCTC, West Virginia. My training is now at Forsythe NWR for the Field Training Program. This is week one of ten. Four weeks will be spent here, four weeks at Cape May, then my final two weeks back here. My Field Training Instructor is Refuge Officer Brian Willard. I am looking forward to completing my training and being a part of the Refuge Systems Law Enforcement Program.

We would like to remind you that from time to time Law Enforcement hosts refuge clean-ups. Contact the Office of Refuge Law Enforcement if you like to be notified of the next clean-up! Until next issue, be safe!



Homemade "Homeless Shelter" at Murray Grove

A Bright Future for Environmental Education at Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

Art Webster, Chief of Visitor Services

Look, there's one feeding! I see a bird bathing! Multiply this by 20 high pitched exclamations about bird behavior as third graders tally their observations. The bird behavior checklist has been a great way to get young students involved with birds without the complexity of identification. It is one of many activities that we are piloting as we develop a more formal offering of EE programs for students and youth groups.

Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge is world famous for its abundant and diverse bird life. It also has a lot of neighbors. This 50,000 acre refuge is scattered along 50 miles of the Jersey shore from Galloway to Brick Townships. It is one of the fastest growing areas in this densely populated state. The 2000 census showed public school enrollment of 41,000 in Atlantic County and almost 72,000 in Ocean County. Besides the public schools, thousands of children are enrolled in private schools, home schools, and are active in scouting and other youth organizations. In 2005, we reached about 1,300 students and scouts with EE programs. There is tremendous potential for our program to grow.

The refuge recently completed its Comprehensive Conservation Plan. This plan provided some direction for EE and identified the need for a step-down visitor services plan and EE plan. The Friends of Forsythe recently formed an Education Committee that will be helping the refuge with EE planning and program development (see article on Environmental Education Committee). Another one of our assets is our Volunteer House which can house eight environmental education interns.

During the current school year we are promoting and using the *Explore the World with Shorebirds!* educator's guide that was recently released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

This outstanding guide is the curriculum for the Shorebird Sister Schools Program, a conservation education program designed for educators and their students. The content of *Explore the World with Shorebirds* CD-ROM includes chapters on connecting cultures, shorebird primer, interdisciplinary classroom activities, field trip planning, and field trip activities. One of our volunteers correlated the activities found within the guide to the 2004 New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. A homeschool co-op used a number of the pre-visit activities for three months and came out to the refuge for three field trips.

In addition to school programs, we do a wide range of activities for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and the Atlantic City Boys and Girls Club. If you are interested in a guided activity for your class or youth group, make a reservation with Cindy Heffley at 609-652-1665 at least two weeks in advance.

Environmental Education Committee Formed

Arlene Petruska, co-chairperson

The Education Steering Committee met to brainstorm, discuss and formulate a plan of action. The goal of this group is to revitalize and develop an ongoing environmental education program at the Refuge utilizing existing programs, activities and resources as found, for example, in the "Sister Shorebird Schools Program" and the "Rhythm of the Refuge". We also discussed enhancing visitor and hands-on exhibits, library resources, teacher's kits, traveling trunk exhibits, photo and slide libraries, field trips, tours and workshops. The objective is to make the Refuge a key presence and destination that would encourage a sense of stewardship and community between the Refuge and it's visitors.

To help achieve our goals, we agreed to establish partnerships with Stockton State's Science and Education Departments, Friends of Forsythe and to seek program information and support from other N.J. resources such as the Wetland's Institute, The Cape May Bird Observatory and the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve. Trips and informational interviews to these resources have been scheduled.

We hope to set in place programs that will ensure an understanding and appreciation of the Refuge's mission. If you are interested in getting involved and helping with school or community educational programs, exhibits, tours or "behind the scenes" activities please call Arlene Petruska at 609-296-0861 or Sandy Perchetti at the Refuge.

Upcoming Programs at Forsythe

Join refuge staff for ...

Native Plant Gardening 101

Saturday, April 1 - Learn more about native plant gardening at the refuge. You will learn about the native species of New Jersey and why native plant gardens are preferred over non-native plant gardens. The program starts at 12:00 at the refuge headquarters building. The 2-hour program is FREE with paid admission to the refuge.

A Hike through History at Chestnut Neck

Come on out to the Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge at the Chestnut Neck Monument on Route 9 east of the town of Port Republic on Saturday, May 6 at 9:00 AM. to learn more about the history of refuge lands at Chestnut Neck. Staff will lead a 1.5 mile historic hike through open and closed areas. The program is FREE with paid admission to the refuge. The program starts promptly at 9:00 a.m. and is open to all ages. Hike is held rain or shine.



John Danzenbaker



John is one of our long time volunteers at Forsythe - he also holds one of the largest world birding lists ever recorded. John was born in Philadelphia and grew up in Havertown, PA. After attending Bucknell University and working a few jobs, he was drafted into the Army and participated in the Normandy Invasion D plus 4, Utah Beach, and was wounded twice. He retired as Lt.Col. in 1964 and began work as a civilian with the FAA Technical Center until retiring in 1980. John and his wife, Sylvie, live in Linwood and have two grown sons Mike and Chris.

An avid birder, John's current World List is 7529. At one time, it was said that his was the second highest in the world. John has traveled the world, covering the best birding areas. His most memorable trip was a five week tour in Peru with legendary leader, Ted Parker.

Forsythe is among John's favorite birding spots in New Jersey, along with Belleplain State Forest, Cape May, Dividing Creek, Barnegat Light and sometimes Lakes Bay, McNamara, and Cape May and Atlantic County Parks. John says that Forsythe Refuge has not changed much over the years. Some new paths have been developed and the new dikes in the West Pool probably divided the water and the vegetation to provide more diversification.

John is an active member of Atlantic Audubon and is part of the team of volunteers doing the weekly bird counts and international shorebird survey on the Refuge.

What advice would he give a new birder? "I would advise any new birder to keep records, use good field guide books and photos. A little family competition and helpful companionship are good. Use camera and tape when appropriate."

We're grateful for John's work at Forsythe throughout the years and extremely proud of his military background. We must never forget those who put their lives on the line to protect this country.

Thank you John.

Programs - continued from page 6

Purple Martin Nest Checks

9:00 A.M. each Thursday from May 25 through August - assist staff and volunteers with conducting Purple Martin nest checks. We will also be providing a short orientation for anyone interested in learning more about the Purple Martinwatch Program. This is a great opportunity for families, youth groups, and individuals to experience a close-up look at these wonderful migratory birds. Depending on the time of the season, you will be able to help count the eggs, measure or band the hatchlings or simply observe the antics of the birds. During rain or severe wind, the nest checks are not conducted. The nest checks will start promptly at 9:00 a.m. Meet at the field in front of the headquarters building.

Unless otherwise stated, programs are held at the Forsythe Refuge, Oceanville. For more information, call Cindy at 609-652-1665

Weekly Bird Walks sponsored by the Friends of Forsythe NWR

Beginning March 25 and continuing through May 27, the Friends of Forsythe NWR will lead bird walks at the refuge on Saturdays. Walks in March and April will be from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM. Walks in May will be from 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM. The cost is \$5.00 per person. Meet at the Friends of Forsythe nature store. For more information call 609-641-4671 or see the Friends website at www.friendsofforsythe.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Stay Focused Photo Club meets the second Saturday of each month at 10 am in the Refuge auditorium.

Native Plant Garden volunteers will be meeting on Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m. at Refuge Headquarters. New members welcome.

Saturday, March 25 - 11 a.m. Environmental Education Committee meeting at refuge headquarters. Anyone interested in helping is welcome to attend.

Saturday, April 22 - 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Hooked On Fishing - Not On Drugs Kids Fishing Derby at Patriot Lake (Galloway Township). Volunteers needed to help with this fun and rewarding event. Open to children 5 to 14 - Registration is limited. If you have someone you want to sign up, call Sandy as soon as possible..

Sunday, May 21 -Volunteer Luncheon & Awards. Watch for your invitation in the mail.

Tower - continued from page 3

As I came out on the Engineers Road shortcut to the Wildlife Drive, there were dozens of American Robins, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Chickadees by the old homestead area. Then just before getting back on the roadway, there was a pair of Brown Thrashers. The male was singing that long, lyrical song that he only does in spring-time. This reminded me that spring is getting here all too soon.

As I rested at the experimental pond having my trail mix snack, I watched a Great Blue Heron and some Mergansers. I thought about all I had seen and reminisced about all of the songbirds I have seen at this spot in the spring. I look forward to the time when I meet more visitors out on the Songbird Trail knowing that they are taking advantage of all the beauty and wonder it has to offer.

~Al Martens

I hope you'll take the time to discover this area for yourself. Feel free to send me any field notes you jot down on your journey. It's great when we can share the wonders of nature with others—especially our fabulous volunteers.



ON THE WEB

Forsythe Refuge's website (<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/forsythe>) continues to expand and grow. It has become an important part of the Refuge's outreach as we provide information for new and recurring visitors. Here are a couple of highlights of what is available on the site:

- Current program/event information.
- Bird sightings
- Directions and weather
- Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan
- Piping Plover Updates (seasonal)
- Personal Pages for club members
- Current "Nature of Volunteering"
- "Nature of Volunteering" archives
- And many, many more items of interest.

Our webmaster, Cindy (cindy_heffley@fws.gov), is always looking for comments about the site. If you have an idea or see something on another site that you feel would add to our site, please contact her.



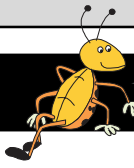
"Great Balls of Fire!"

Vinny Turner, Wildlife Biologist

Over the last three years, the islands within the East Pool and the surrounding dikes were chemically treated with an herbicide (Glyphosate) to reduce the stands of phragmites, known as the common reed, which limited the diversity of native plant species on these islands. After the final treatment, the phragmites were allowed to dry out in preparation for the next phase of the treatment. Though dead, the phragmites still stand, preventing open space for new vegetative growth, as well as obstructing the views of birders looking into the impoundments. One method for removing these stands of phragmites is through the use of fire. Such fires occurred on 3/1/06 and 3/8/06.

Known as a prescribed burn, fire is purposely set to these stands of phragmites to remove the standing canes. When used properly, fire is an excellent tool to remove unwanted vegetation from various types of habitats. However, there is more to prescribed burning than just dropping a match and letting nature take its course. Prior to each burn, a specific plan is developed. Within the plan, there are specific guidelines or 'prescriptions' which must be in place in order for the burn to proceed. These prescriptions include anchor points, wind direction and speed, relative humidity, air temperature, hourly forecasts, the number of fire crews and equipment, and smoke dispersal. Should any of these elements become unfavorable for burning, no burning will be conducted. Should that happen while a burn is in progress, all further burning will cease and no new fires will be started.

Crews working the fires wear flame retardant clothing; know as Nomex, to protect them from the flames. A mixture of diesel fuel and gasoline used to ignite the fires is carried in a container call a drip torch. The torch is constantly lit and ignited fuel can be dispensed where ever it is needed. As you drive around the East Pool, look for these burned over areas. When done properly, the land area is open and 98% free of dead standing phragmites. The end result will be more diversity of plant species, increased wildlife usage, and better viewing opportunities for the public.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Discover the joys of gardening. Help our volunteers care for our native plant garden. They meet at our headquarters building at 10:00 a.m. every Thursday during the Spring and Fall. The first meeting will be Thursday, March 30th. Please come out and give them a hand.

\$270 Million in Damages to Gulf Refuges Threatens Entire System

Washington, D.C. - At a hearing today in the U.S. House of Representatives, the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) detailed the massive hurricane damage to Gulf Coast national wildlife refuges (NWR) and urged Congress to take swift action to speed their restoration. 2005 Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Wilma and Dennis inflicted damage to 66 national wildlife refuges in eight states.

"This is literally an unmitigated disaster," said Evan Hirsche, President of the National Wildlife Refuge Association. "The estimated \$270 million in damages represents approximately 70% of the Refuge System's annual budget. America's diverse wildlife heritage will suffer a great blow if we don't act quickly to address the damages."

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, total facility and habitat damages from the 2005 storms have exceeded \$270 million. At Breton NWR in Louisiana, which includes all of the federally owned Chandeleur islands, an estimated 50-70% of habitat was completely washed away, with nothing but open water remaining. A number of refuges are also contaminated with hazardous materials (HAZMAT). "As we sit here today, more than 1,400 barrels of toxic liquids and gases are sinking further into the low-lying marsh right in the heart of Sabine National Wildlife Refuge (LA)," said Hirsche. "In short, we're looking at a refuge that's effectively been converted to a toxic dump."

An emergency supplemental request from President Bush asks for \$132.4 million for facility repair and clean up on hurricane-impacted refuges. The NWRA has called on Congress to approve emergency funding for refuges of at least the level requested by President Bush. Further, Hirsche urged members of the Committee to support an additional \$88 million to address habitat and natural resource damage in another supplemental funding bill this year.

"Restoring the marshes and estuaries vital to supporting wildlife is only half the equation," said Hirsche. "We now recognize that these areas are also critical to the security of coastal communities and provide economic benefits in the form of recreation and tourism. By supporting additional funds to sufficiently address the massive refuge facility and natural resource damages, both wildlife and people benefit."

Established in 1975, the National Wildlife Refuge Association is the only organization dedicated exclusively to protecting, enhancing and expanding the National Wildlife Refuge System, lands and waters set aside by the American people to protect our country's diverse wildlife heritage. A national membership organization, the organization benefits from the support of U.S. Fish and Wildlife professionals, more than 100 refuge "Friends" group affiliates, and thousands of individual members in all states. For more information, visit www.refugenet.org.

Bird Facts

North America Bird Size Records

Heaviest: California Condor 23lbs

Lightest: Calliope Hummingbird 0.1oz / 2.7g

Tallest: Whooping Crane 5'

Longest: Mute Swan 60"

Trumpeter Swan 60"

Shortest/Smallest: Calliope Hummingbird 3.25"

Greatest Wingspan: California Condor 109"

Shortest Wingspan: Calliope Hummingbird 4.25"

ATTENTION !!

CALLING ALL SERVICEMEN & WOMEN

Memorial Day is a time for remembering. In the next issue of "Nature of Volunteering," we will be honoring all of our volunteers who have served our country. If you have been in the military, please let us know. Send us your name, branch of service, the years you served, and any interesting stories you have from your time on active duty.

Wildlife Word Search

N	S	B	I	R	D	N	W	T	P	E	U
A	O	H	G	B	R	J	V	T	O	H	G
T	N	S	I	A	A	O	O	S	N	S	I
U	D	U	G	T	G	E	L	U	D	U	G
R	A	C	T	I	O	N	E	R	W	R	I
E	E	U	F	H	N	A	D	T	E	L	L
A	D	R	P	P	F	N	W	T	E	U	R
P	O	M	M	A	L	L	A	R	D	B	I
G	Y	N	W	T	Y	X	N	O	R	E	H
N	E	U	O	T	T	E	R	N	W	T	W
X	P	O	N	D	D	I	P	P	I	N	G

Action Bat Bird Bulrush Dragonfly
 Frog Heron Mallard Nature Nymph
 Otter Pond Dipping Pondweed Trust
 Vole Whirligig

from WildKids.org

WHO'S ON STAFF?

Project Leader
STEVE ATZERT

Deputy Project Leader
VACANT

Acting Refuge Manager
Barnegat Division
VINNY TURNER

Chief of Visitor Services
ART WEBSTER

Biologist
VINNY TURNER

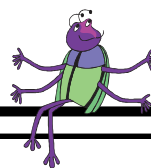
Refuge Law Enforcement Officers
BRIAN WILLARD, CHRIS PANCILA

Administrative
Officer
MARTHA HAND

Visitor Services
Manager
CINDY HEFFLEY

Volunteer Coordinator
SANDY PERCHETTI

Maintenance Professional
TOM HOLDSWORTH



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